Introduction

John Edwards

Most readers will know that issues of language and culture are central to current Canadian social and political life. Recent constitutional crises have, one regrets to say, made the country – and Quebec in particular – excellent contexts in which to observe languages in contact, minority-group and ethnolinguistic dynamics, the relationship between language and nationalism, and the strains under which officially sponsored policies of ‘social engineering’ (bilingualism and multiculturalism) must now operate. In some settings, disputes over language and culture are largely symbolic; deeper problems between groups lie elsewhere, usually in political or economic domains, and language, or religion, or tradition act mainly as team jerseys. To discuss symbolism, of course, is not to discuss something inconsequential. The power attaching to what people believe best represents their culture can be considerable. Indeed, the intangible strength of ‘blood and belonging’ has made itself all too evident historically. In Canada, it is quite clear that this sort of powerful symbolic marking is at work but, in addition, the force of nationalism is itself central to much of the debate. It is not economic deprivation or lack of effective political representation which most accurately characterizes the Quebec sovereignty movement, for example. It is, rather, what John Stuart Mill referred to more than a century ago:

If . . . unreconciled nationalities are geographically separate, and especially if their local position is such that there is no natural fitness or convenience in their being under the same government . . . there is not only an obvious propriety, but, if either freedom or concord is cared for, a necessity, for breaking the connection altogether. (1864 [1861], pp. 361-366)

In this sense, the struggle of Quebec nationalists is entirely understandable and has many historic parallels: it is the struggle of those who believe that nationalistic feelings dictate, at the most profound level, that the only possible government is self-government. If this sense is deep enough, then its very intangibility proves to be its greatest strength.
John Edwards

We are living now in the aftermath of an extremely close referendum on sovereignty, held in Quebec on 30 October 1995. The question put to the voters was this:

Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership, within the scope of the Bill respecting the future of Quebec and of the agreement signed on June 12, 1995?

Among a very large turn-out, 48.5 per cent said yes, 49.7 per cent no. The difference between 'yes' and 'no' amounted to only 53,498 votes out of a total of 4.7 million (the number of spoiled or rejected ballots was considerably greater than this difference).

It is not my purpose here to go into any detail about the convoluted events leading up to the October referendum (see, however, Edwards, 1994, 1995, in press), but it is obvious from the referendum results alone that the story is not completed. It is a story which has concentrated minds wonderfully – but it is insufficiently appreciated how the debate over the place of Quebec within (or without) the Canadian federation has drawn in all groups, including aboriginal and allophone populations, and has occasioned intense scrutiny of all matters dealing with language, culture and inter-group accommodation.

The major players in the drama continue to act out their accustomed roles: most Quebec francophones clearly want substantial changes in federal-provincial arrangements, and many are committed to outright independence; anglophones and allophones debate about how much change (if any) ought to be made and, as well, argue for a reworking of their own positions in the mosaic; aboriginal groups are adamant that if any `distinct' status (such as Quebec has historically argued for within Canada) were to be on offer, they should surely be the first and most obvious recipients. They also argue that their members in Quebec cannot be taken out of Canada, against their will, by the secessionists – thus raising interesting and vexing questions about where democratic rights of secession end. (It is clear, by the way, that Quebec nationalists who argue that they have a right to secede – following a successful referendum – would generally deny that same course of action to the James Bay Cree. *Quod licet foetu non licet bovi*, after all, could be the motto of many nationalist groups who have to deal with internal divisions.)

These, as I say, are (and have been) the main players, and it is important to realize that the francophone-anglophone debate has in fact acted as a catalyst for broader discussions, among virtually all constituencies, about the shape of the country. It is not unfair to suggest that all group affiliations and all identities
Introduction

- as well as all official and non-official manifestations of, and support for, them
- are now in a state of flux.

A consideration of language in Canada is intrinsically interesting, no matter what the state of political play. Like Australia or the United States, Canada is a new-world 'receiving' country, made up of many different indigenous and immi-
grant groups, cultures and languages. And, like these other states, it has recently
been struggling with the multicultural and multilingual realities to which a mod-
ern, diverse, liberal society must – by its deepest principles – be sensitive. The
question, as always, is how best to act (or, indeed, to refrain from acting) on this
sensitivity. It is a considerable pleasure to be able to say that Canadian writers
and intellectuals have, themselves, been in the recent forefront of this discussion
(see, for example, Kymlicka, 1995a, 1995b; Taylor, 1992, 1994).

If, however, a consideration of language – an enduringly important aspect of
the Canadian social fabric – is of abiding intrinsic interest, how much greater is
that interest now, given the contemporary stresses briefly alluded to above? The
contributors to this volume would all agree, I am sure, that this is a particularly
useful time at which to take stock, to assess the central linguistic and cultural
strands in the Canadian pattern, and to present an up-to-date overview.

Language in Canada is the fourth such volume to be produced by
Cambridge. In 1981, Language in the USA appeared, edited by Charles Ferguson
and Shirley Brice Heath. Its chapters dealt with the history and the current status
of the language situation in the United States, as well as with likely or possible
changes thereto. In his foreword, Dell Hymes observed that it was a much-needed
book, ‘a resource to citizens, a spur to scholars, a challenge to those who shape
policy and public life' (p. ix). The book contained five chapters on English in
America, four on ‘languages before English’ (aboriginal varieties and Spanish),
and seven on languages after English. This last section was something of a mixed
tag, touching upon Italian, Spanish, French, German and other languages; it also
included one state ‘profile’ – for Montana.

Peter Trudgill's Language in the British Isles was published in 1984. In his
preface, the editor (like Hymes, above) argued for the utility of the book for a
wide audience:

It is also hoped that much of the information contained in this work will percolate
into spheres outside those inhabited by academic linguists. Many educationists,
journalists, broadcasters, lawyers, social scientists and politicians have begun to
realize, and many more will surely do so, that they need more information about
languages and language situations to aid them in decision-making and policy-
forming of various sorts. (p. ix)
John Edwards

This broader appeal was particularly aimed at in the book’s final section, on sociolinguistics. Here, nine chapters discuss the ‘social, cultural, demographic and political situations’ (p. 406) of indigenous and immigrant minority languages. The other three sections of the book are more explicitly linguistic in emphasis (as Trudgill points out): fourteen chapters are devoted to varieties of English, six to Celtic languages, and four to ‘other languages’ (including Romani, Norn and Shelta).

The third previous volume in this Cambridge ‘series’ is that edited by Suzanne Romaine in 1991, Language in Australia. The editor introduces the collection as a ‘companion and complement’ to Ferguson and Heath, and Trudgill, and one which stresses sociolinguistic perspectives. The book has five sections. The first (comprising eight chapters) treats aboriginal varieties, the second has five contributions on Australian pidgin and creole languages, the third devotes six chapters to ‘transplanted languages other than English’ (Greek, Dutch, German, etc.), the fourth presents three chapters on varieties of Australian English, and the final section is on ‘public policy and social issues’ – another mixed bag, in that its three chapters discuss national language policy and planning, social-class lexical variation, and the Plain English movement.

I profited greatly from a detailed analysis of these preceding volumes, and found each to be an extremely useful compendium. All three contain generally clear writing and are successful in their aim of broad audience accessibility. In planning Language in Canada, I too had in mind style and content that would attract a wide readership. I hoped that the contributing authors would – in line with the material and guidelines supplied when the project was introduced to them – achieve a jargon-free clarity appealing to both a scholarly and a non-academic audience, to both a specialist and a non-specialist readership. Two further guidelines emerged from the preceding volumes. The first was that the present book ought to be more sociolinguistic, or sociology-of-language, in nature and should, wherever possible, avoid more technical linguistic treatments. That is, the overall desire here was to provide a comprehensive review of the social contexts in which languages in Canada have existed, now exist, and are likely to exist in the future. (At some points, of course, more purely linguistic details are called for, and it would have been inappropriate not to have included them.)

The second guideline was suggested by the chapter on Montana (by Anthony Beltramo), in the Ferguson and Heath collection. As a general profile, this works well, but one is left wondering about the particular rationale for discussing Montana; after all, other states (one imagines) might have served as well, or
Introduction

better, as sociolinguistic exemplars. If, on the other hand, a regional coverage for its own sake is important, then one such chapter is obviously insufficient.

Given that regional coverage can indeed be both important and interesting, the idea then arose - for this volume - of combining both thematic and regional coverage under one roof. That is, the goal became a book of two main sections: the first would round up the usual (for Canada, at any rate) thematic suspects, while the second would provide brief overviews of regions. The dozen provinces and territories naturally suggested themselves here as the obvious, and not too unwieldy, subjects. The reader interested in heritage-language education in general will find a thematic chapter devoted to that subject, one which touches upon the matter from a national perspective; the reader more particularly concerned with the teaching of Spanish in Ontario - or, indeed, with the general state of language affairs in that province - will find a more regionally focused discussion.

It became necessary, then, to ensure that not too much overlap occurred between the 'thematic' and the 'geographic' chapters. Authors were given the overall outline, of course, and the general aims of the volume were explained to them. Beyond that, however, contributors were encouraged to consult among themselves, as appropriate, so as to coordinate and unite forces. Some slight overlap has, inevitably, crept in. Authors can be requested to follow certain guidelines, but it is both difficult and inappropriate to constrain them unduly. Besides, a little redundancy is not a bad thing in a volume of this size, and it is unlikely, in any event, that reading two authors on the same matter will amount to straightforward repetition. Cross-referencing notes, by the way, are largely absent here. This is because, in most cases, it is perfectly clear to the reader which other chapters are likely to contain complementary information; and because there are detailed indexes provided.

Language in Canada is thus in two sections: the first, of fifteen chapters, deals with the most important current language and language-related matters in a thematic way; the second contains eleven 'regional' chapters, covering the ten provinces and (in one contribution) the two northern territories.

In chapter 1, William Mackey introduces the collection with a comprehensive historical overview. He provides a picture of Canada before the arrival of European fishermen, traders and settlers, noting that – a generation before Cartier’s historic voyages – some aboriginal people had been brought to France in the hope that they would learn French. Later attempts to learn each other’s languages included rather dubious undertakings, as Mackey points out. As well, linguistic 'conceptual frameworks' alien to the French contributed to the drive to acculturate the aboriginal peoples to a new society. Mackey then turns to the expansion of
John Edwards

French throughout the country, the fall of New France to Britain, and the consequent spread of English. He then adds to the picture the arrival of the so-called ‘heritage’ languages – which, in the Canadian context, are all languages other than French, English and aboriginal. Brief comments on the emerging varieties of French and English precede Mackey’s important remarks on the political and linguistic clash between Canadian francophones and anglophones. Throughout his chapter, Mackey interweaves the story of language with the broader history and, were the reader to progress no farther than this opening contribution, he or she would still obtain a good general summary.

For chapter 2, Charles Castonguay was asked to clarify the sometimes confusing official data bearing upon language numbers, concentrations, distributions, and so on. Although Canada is now a country of many languages, Castonguay observes that ‘society still remains essentially [linguistically] dual’ – about 92 per cent of the Canadian population speaks either French or English at home, and the assimilation of allophone varieties – especially by English – continues apace. Castonguay also points out that French and English are, by and large, geographically separate, and their territorialization is increasing; thus, ‘official mother-tongue minorities – English in Quebec and French outside Quebec – are both steadily declining in relative importance’. He notes the asymmetry of language abilities existing between the francophone and allophone populations: census data reveal both a quantitative asymmetry (there are more francophones with competence in English than there are allophones with French abilities) and a qualitative one (many more francophones than allophones have advanced skills in the second language). At the end of a chapter packed full of information, Castonguay suggests that the traditional Canadian linguistic duality is waning, and an increasingly ethnically diverse – but generally English-speaking – society is evolving.

Kenneth McRae presents a satisfying description of official Canadian bilingualism in chapter 3. The foundation, deliberations and recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (established in 1963) are considered in some detail, as are the federal government’s policy responses. The Official Languages Act (1969), recognizing English and French as co-official varieties was indeed a ‘landmark statute’. The chapter is particularly strong in its treatment of the reconfiguration of the federal public service following the 1969 Act, and there is an intriguing section dealing with the idea – never acted upon – of the formal establishment of bilingual districts, and the arguments over the ‘territorial’ and ‘personality’ principles applicable to bilingual policy. McRae’s chapter concludes with a careful five-point summary.
Introduction

In chapter 4, John Berry describes the other relevant Canadian policy of social engineering – official multiculturalism. He outlines the policy itself and reactions to it, and notes how an understanding of multiculturalism must necessarily accompany any consideration of language matters. On the latter point, it is instructive to recall that, from its inception in 1971, the Canadian multicultural policy was to exist ‘within a bilingual framework’ – while one can understand why the government would wish to present the policy in this way, one can also realize that potential stresses were likely to result. Berry discusses this, as well as the criticisms of official multiculturalism, chief among which are the views that the policy perpetuates ethnic separateness and is, in any event, an act of political opportunism. In charting public attitudes towards multiculturalism, Berry draws upon his own previous research, notably his fourfold model of acculturation. In his concluding pages, the author discusses multiculturalism – and the general public endorsement of diversity – in the context of the falling away of ‘heritage’ languages.

Chapter 5, by Kimberly Noels and Richard Clément, is the first of three contributions emphasizing educational matters (see also chapters 14 and 15). Here, the authors attend principally to the learning of French and English as second languages. They present first an overview of language education policies, particularly since the establishment of official bilingualism and multiculturalism. They then move to a consideration of the all-important contexts in which language learning is to occur, providing a useful review of the relevant literature. Noels and Clément also discuss some of the important effects second-language learning can have upon personal and group identity and adjustment. Throughout their detailed chapter, they emphasize that language learning is not only a pedagogical matter, but also a social one – in the Canadian context this is a particularly relevant observation.

Chapters 6 and 7 (by Eung Do Cook and Lynn Drapeau, respectively) deal with the history and current status of aboriginal languages in Canada. Beginning with some notes on language origins and classifications, Cook provides an excellent summary of the aboriginal varieties found in Canada, paying particular attention to distributions and inter-relationships. The author then turns to the often difficult matters of estimating speaker numbers and assessing language vitality. If we compare some of Cook’s numbers with those cited by Drapeau, we observe some quite striking differences: consider their estimates for speakers of Chipewyan or Tsimshian, for example. Some of the variation here is due to authors’ restriction (or not) to mother-tongue speakers, but this is not the whole story. Difficulties here arise for many other reasons – some of which are touched
John Edwards

upon in the two chapters – and are of intrinsic interest themselves. Readers may like to know that Cook and Drapeau were in touch with one another during the preparation stages. Drapeau’s chapter complements the previous one, and begins with a consideration of aboriginal definition and demolinguistics. She then outlines aboriginal language rights pertaining to education (from both historical and contemporary perspectives). More broadly, Drapeau assesses the state of legal protection for aboriginal varieties and the demands currently being made by aboriginal groups in defense of their languages and cultures.

In the next four chapters (8, 9, 10 and 11), we turn from aboriginal languages to French. In chapter 8, Robert Papen provides an overview of Canadian varieties of French. While providing some historical detail concerning the spread of French in the country, the author emphasizes phonological variation. Papen’s contribution is the most ‘linguistic’ in the book, but non-specialist readers ought not to be put off by the symbols his presentation requires: he provides an excellent introduction to his subject, with a host of examples. Quebec French, Ontario French, Acadian and Métis varieties, the French of western Canada – all are dealt with here, and Papen also inserts, where appropriate, notes about influence from English. The following three chapters then give more sociolinguistic detail about French in Canada, in its most obviously important settings: first, in Quebec, where it is strongest; second, in New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province, where francophones comprise about one-third of the population; third, in the rest of the country, where French has a much more troubled existence.

Philippe Barbaud (chapter 9) presents a picture in which French in Quebec is numerically dominant but still insecure. It is threatened by English, but also (particularly in Montreal, of course) by the ‘weak attraction’ it exerts upon allophone immigrant groups. Barbaud discusses the various official efforts to intervene on behalf of French – the Office de la langue française, the French Language Charter (Bill 101), and so on – as well as the many unofficial pressures which assail it. To say that this is a timely discussion is an understatement of some magnitude. In June 1996, for example, the Quebec government tabled Bill 40, a series of amendments to the French Language Charter which has been in effect for almost twenty years. If enacted, this new bill provides for (among other things) the resurrection of the Commission de protection de la langue française – the so-called ‘language police’ (sometimes, even more pejoratively, termed ‘tongue troopers’) who would oversee the status of French in designated contexts. This possibility seems to have galvanized the anglophone minority in Quebec, who have become more vociferous in resisting what it sees as infringements on
Introduction

basic language rights. Equally – and, indeed, reinforced by anglophone protest – many Quebec francophones are becoming more intransient on language matters.

In chapter 10, Réal Allard and Rodrigue Landry document the status of French in New Brunswick, Canada’s only officially bilingual province. They do this largely from the social psychological perspective of language vitality, an approach with which they are thoroughly familiar. This model, particularly appropriate where two or more languages are in contact, considers both sociological and psychological factors – including the group’s demographic, economic and cultural ‘capital’, as well as group members’ language competencies, attitudes and networks. Allard and Landry thus provide us with a succinct and up-to-date analysis of French in the province, one which reveals the intertwining of language with other relevant facets of social life. As in other minority-language discussions, the reader will observe that – running through this chapter – there is a central thread of group identity. To complete this group of chapters, Raymond Mougeon (in chapter 11) describes French outside the provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec. He begins with an historical overview, followed by a thorough review of current status. Relating his assessment to previous work, Mougeon emphasizes the most important domains of language transmission and continuity – home, neighbourhood, school, work and religion.

With chapter 12 and chapter 13 (by Jack Chambers and Gary Caldwell, respectively), attention switches from French to English. The reader may think that English has been somewhat slighted here – having only two chapters directly devoted to it, compared to the four given to French – but the position of English in the country, outside Quebec, does not call for the attention demanded by French (for obvious reasons). Chambers’s chapter is in some ways analogous to Papen’s (chapter 8), but it is more discursive and less linguistically technical. There is also a strong emphasis here upon the historical background to present-day varieties of Canadian English. Caldwell, too (in his chapter 13), provides the necessary background to an understanding of the status of anglophones and their language in Quebec. ‘English Quebec’, as Caldwell defines it, is in serious decline, and (as my notes to Barboud’s chapter 9 suggest) recent political developments have aggravated the relationship between anglophones and francophones in the province. When Caldwell describes English Quebec as a ‘culture under siege’, he reflects well the feelings of many within anglophone society – despite the fact that the Parti Québécois government would no doubt claim that this is a considerable exaggeration. It is true that Quebec’s English speakers have historically been able to live their lives more or less completely in their own language – a state of affairs foreign to most minorities – and, indeed, this
John Edwards

is still possible. However, what some have characterized as the 'whining posture' now adopted by the community derives, in part, from the self-perception that, in Canada, they are not a minority, that the province remains a part of the whole and that, therefore, their linguistic and cultural rights are somehow being unfairly abrogated. Such is the outcome of a clash of identities, of disputed conceptions of what is or is not a minority group, of debates surrounding individual versus collective rights, and so on.

From analyses of francophone and anglophone dynamics, we turn (in Jim Cummins’s chapter 14) to the allophone population and, more specifically, to the teaching of languages other than English, French or aboriginal varieties. These allophone varieties, once styled 'heritage languages', are now officially designated as 'international languages'. There are, certainly, points of interest concerning these languages other than educationally-related ones, but their school status is, arguably, the single most important dimension. (In the ‘regional’ chapters, 16 to 26, more particular treatments are given, where appropriate, to allophone varieties.) Apart from outlining the educational status of international languages in various jurisdictions, Cummins describes some of the more important research evaluating their teaching and learning. Of particular import here are those findings which probe beyond language competencies and teaching methods to illuminate the broader social and cognitive correlates of international-language education.

In chapter 15, Fred Genesee assesses French immersion education – perhaps the best-known Canadian innovation in language teaching. He places his discussion in the context of French-English relations, language attitudes and practices. A thorough description of the current status of immersion follows, with due regard given to the various types of programmes. While (naturally) treating the direct pedagogical outcomes of immersion education, Genesee also considers the broader social impact – students’ attitudes and actual use of French competence. This is particularly important since, for many, immersion has been seen not only as a superior language-acquisition technique, but also as the best educational bridge between the two classic Canadian ‘solitudes’.

The final eleven contributions (chapters 16 to 26) deal with the linguistic landscape in Canada’s ten provinces and two territories. There is, reasonably enough, some degree of variation in their contents – authors have emphasized what they considered to be the most salient aspects, as well as indulging (to some extent, at least) in topics of more particular interest to them. I did, however, make an effort to enlist the services of contributors who could be relied upon to provide broad overviews, and I provided them all with some general guidelines. Without wishing to impose too much on authors’ freedom of movement (which is, as I have